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Terry Goddard Applauds Court Order to Protect FLDS Trust

(Phoenix, Ariz. - May 27, 2004) Attorney General Terry Goddard today commended a court decision that suspends the trustees and effectively freezes the assets of the United Effort Plan (UEP) trust in the nation's largest polygamous community on the Arizona-Utah border.

The trust controls property and assets, estimated to total more than \$100 million, of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (FLDS) in Colorado City, Arizona, and Hildale, Utah. The suspended trustees include FLDS leader Warren Jeffs.

"This ruling is a major step toward reducing the arbitrary power of Warren Jeffs and protecting the trust from his manipulation, liquidation and misuse," Goddard said. "The judge agreed with us that Jeffs and the other trustees did not manage the trust properly and should be stripped of their authority."

The temporary restraining order was issued today by District Judge Robert W. Adkins in state court in Salt Lake City, Utah. The action was filed by Utah Attorney General Mark Shurtleff because the trust is legally located in that state. Goddard has worked closely with Shurtleff in the case and has applied to intervene because the trust holds assets in Arizona and many of its beneficiaries live in the state.

Goddard said today's court decision was not directly connected with his office's seizure of financial records earlier this week at the Colorado Unified School District. But both actions hold up to public scrutiny the conduct of Jeffs and other FLDS leaders, he said.

"For the past two years, I've worked with the Utah attorney general on a coordinated effort to investigate all credible allegations of child abuse, sexual exploitation, welfare fraud, tax evasion and other financial wrongdoing. The events of this week show we are making good progress."

The court order appointed Bruce Wisan, a certified public accountant in Salt Lake City, as special fiduciary to take charge of the trust on a temporary basis. Judge Adkins said a hearing will be held on June 6 to determine whether to continue the restraining order.

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